



Overcoming Challenges to Family Engagement

Use this tool to explore common family engagement challenges, possible underlying causes, and potential solutions. The first few have been filled in, the others are blank to generate staff discussion.

Challenges	Possible underlying causes	Potential solutions
Forms sent home to be signed are never returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth misplaces the form. - Youth forgets to show it to family. - Families don't understand the form. - Family members work in the afternoon and evening and don't see youth until they are asleep. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a folder for important forms. - Choose one day a week for important forms to go home so families know when to look for them. - Translate the form into the appropriate languages and go over the form with youth so they can explain them to their family members. - Send forms electronically or through the mail.
Only a few families attend open houses or other meetings related to the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families don't have easy access to transportation to the program site. - Family members can't get time off from their jobs. - Family members don't have people to look after their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinating around bus schedules, providing transportation and having your event at a more central location are all ways to increase attendance. - Plan events on weekends or repeat the event on different days and at different times to allow more families to attend.
Families never answer our phone calls and don't return them when we leave messages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families phone numbers may have changed or been disconnected. - Families may not be able to reach you during the day because of work or family obligations. - Families may not speak English well enough to carry on a phone conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get updated contact information throughout the course of year and use other communication methods (email, regular mail, etc.). - At the beginning of the year, let families know when you can be reached. - Use an interpreter to talk for you or learn enough of their home language to ask them to come in for a visit.
Family members don't come into the building when they pick up their children.		
Families don't take the program seriously. They just view us as babysitters.		



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Families have had bad past experiences in schools and are reluctant to get involved.		
Families don't know how to help their children with homework.		
Other:		